Australian Bureau of Statistics

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Number of people not in the labour force remains stable at 3.7 millio

Figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that in September 2000 there were 3.7 million people aged 15 to 69 years who were not in the labour force (i.e. neither employed nor unemployed). The figure has not changed substantially since the 1999 survey.

These 3.7 million people made up 27 percent of Australia's civilian population aged 15-69 years, with females accounting for two-thirds of persons not in the labour force, a proportion which has remained steady over recent years.

The number of people with marginal attachment to the labour force fell to 823,900, a decrease of 7 percent since September 1999. People are defined as marginally attached to the labour force if they want to work and are not actively looking for work but are available to start work within four weeks (767,100 people in September 2000), or they want to work and are actively looking for work but are unavailable to start in the survey reference week (56,800). Other findings on persons with marginal attachment include:

- Two-thirds of the 568,800 females would have preferred part-time work.
- For males the most common reasons for not actively looking for work were "attending an educational institution" (27 percent) and "own ill health or disability" (20 percent).
- The most common reasons for not actively looking for work for females were "child-care" (29 percent) and "attending an educational institution" (13 percent).

There were an estimated 106,500 discouraged jobseekers in September 2000, an increase of 1 percent since September 1999. Discouraged jobseekers have marginal attachment to the labour force. They are people who want to work and are available to start, but are not actively looking for work, as they believe they could not find a job. The main reasons given for this were "believed employers considered them too young or too old" (45 percent), "lacked necessary schooling, training, skills or experience" (23 percent), and "no jobs in locality or line of work" (22 percent). Females made up 70 percent of all discouraged jobseekers, an increase of 5 percentage points since September 1999.

Over three-quarters (78 percent) of the 3.7 million persons not in the labour force were those without marginal attachment to the labour force, an increase of 1 percentage point since September 1999. The majority of these (88 percent) were people who did not want to work or were permanently unable to work, a proportion which has remained stable over the last five years. The remaining 335,500 people wanted to work but were neither actively looking nor available to start within four weeks.

Copies of the publication **Persons not in the Labour Force, Australia, September 2000** (cat. no. 6220.0) are available from ABS Bookshop. **This release and a summary of the publication**

are available on this site. If you wish to purchase a copy of this publication, contact the ABS Bookshop in your capital city.

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